

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The City of College Station

The Comprehensive Plan approved for the City of College Station, Texas, in 1997 provided general guidance for the development of recreation, park, and open space resources and services in the community into the new millennium. However, the city's Department of Parks and Recreation found that more specific direction was needed to identify current and future citizen needs and desires and to respond to them in a timely manner. This Recreation, Park, and Open Space Master Plan fills that void, identifying goals and objectives through the year 2012 and laying the groundwork for implementation of projects and programs which will meet the community's recreation, park, and open space needs over this time period. The Department plans future updates of this document to respond to new trends and changes in the community's demographic make-up and demand for recreation, park, and open space services.

The mission statement of College Station's Parks & Recreation Department is to provide the citizens of the city with high quality park facilities and recreational activities that are geographically and demographically accessible and serve a diversity of interests. The intent of this document is to provide the framework to continue the fulfillment of this mission statement.

Historical Background. The City of College Station is located in Brazos County, approximately equidistant between Houston and Austin (see **Map A on page I-2**). It was incorporated in 1938 and currently covers an area of 40.8 square miles. College Station's population was estimated to be 67,890 at the end of 2000,¹ which includes 60-65% (26,400- 28,600) of the 44,000+ students enrolled at Texas A&M University.² Just under 10,000 of the students live on campus; most of the remainder live off-campus in College Station or in adjacent Bryan, Texas. The City of Bryan, which is the Brazos County seat, Kurten, and Wixon Valley are the three other incorporated municipalities in the county.

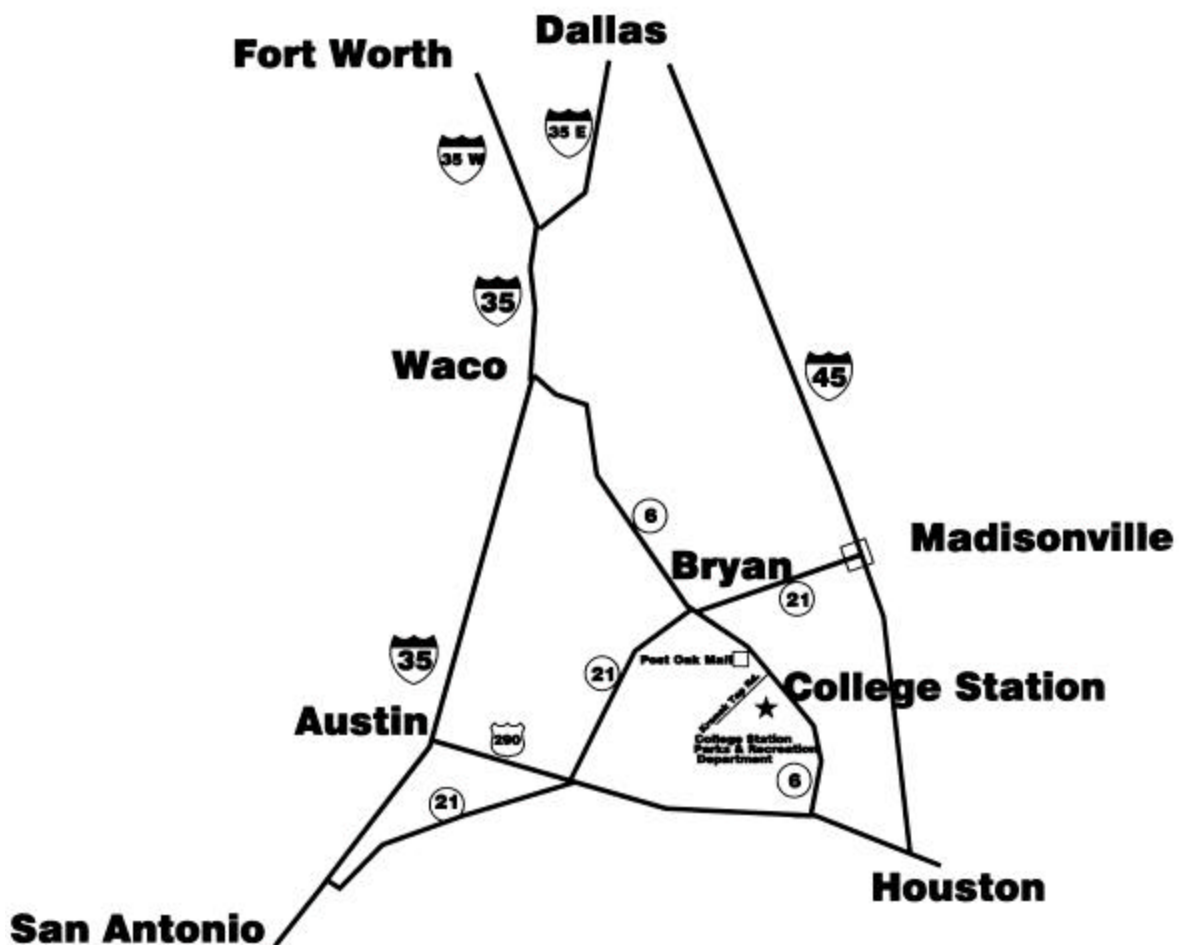
The history of College Station as a community dates back to the founding of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas (now Texas A&M University) in 1876 as a land grant institution. Before the city's incorporation, several neighborhoods began to develop around the perimeter of the campus, including Northgate (the principal commercial area in the early years of the community), Eastgate/College Hills (mostly residential, with some commercial development), and the Southside neighborhood, where many of the city's historically-significant homes and structures are located.

¹Source: December 2000 Census information.

²Planning officials of College Station use these percentages as estimates of the number of students who live on and off campus in College Station, with the remaining 35-40% presumed to live in Bryan or in the county. There have been no recent studies, however, to support this estimate. The majority of these students are September to May residents of the city. Enrollment total is for the spring semester 2002.

Population Growth. Through the 1970s, the majority of new growth in College Station continued to be located adjacent to the university. Due to the physical constraints of the City of Bryan to the north, a ridge line to the west, and Carter's Creek to the east, the City's 1980 Comprehensive Plan directed future growth to the south of existing development.

By the 1990s, the city's growth and prosperity mirrored that of the university. The university's student population exceeded 40,000, making it one of the largest campuses in the country. The university has seen its enrollment expand to approximately 45,000 students. As College Station heads into the next century, its challenge is to continue to encourage quality growth, while expanding forms of residential and nonresidential development which are less dependent on a university-based economy. The direction of future growth, as described in the city's 1997 Comprehensive Plan, will continue to be to the south of existing development.



Map A

B. Population Demographics and Growth

Growth Issues. College Station's population has increased steadily, with the most prolific decade being the 1970s. In those ten years, the annual rate of growth was 11.1%.³ In the 1980-90 time period, the combined rate of population growth in College Station was 40.7% (average 4.1% per annum), compared to 24.1% in Bryan (average 2.4% per annum).⁴ The 2000 census recorded the population of Brazos County at 152,415, including 67,890 residents of College Station and 65,660 residents of Bryan. *This is very likely an undercount, however, because most of the university's students give their home address to census takers, even though they live in Bryan/College Station for nine months of the year and utilize city services during that time.* With a growth rate of 3% per year, the estimated population of College Station is 69,612 in 2002.

Demographic Issues. Table 1 on page 4, contrasts College Station's 2000 socioeconomic and demographic profile with that of the county as a whole (including Bryan) and the state of Texas. In general, College Station residents are more highly educated than the county and state as a whole, reflecting the large number of university students and faculty who live in the city. In addition, per capita income is lower than county and state averages, reflecting the large number of university students who have only part-time employment.

The impact of the university on age of residents is also apparent, with 35.6% of city inhabitants in the 20-24-age range (compared to 7.38% for the state as a whole). College Station also significantly exceeds the statewide average for residents in the 15-19 age range (17.9% compared to 7.86% for the state as a whole). Combining these two cohort groups, ***53.5% of College Station's population is 15 to 24 years old, in contrast to a statewide average of 15.24%.*** The percentage of the city's population in these groups is in fact likely to be even higher because, as mentioned above, many of the university's students give their hometown address to census takers. The demographic make-up of College Station was thus an important consideration in the development of this master plan, since young adults typically utilize park and recreation services proportionately more than older age groups.

College Station has significantly fewer racial/ethnic minorities compared to the county and the state. The percentage of residents of Hispanic origin, for example, is significantly lower in College Station (10%) and the county (17.88%) than in the state as a whole (31.99%).

Population Projections. Pending revised estimates from the 2000 census, population projections through the year 2012 are somewhat speculative. One study, using a variety of statistical

³Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum, Inc., Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc., and Camp Dresser & McKee, Inc. The College Station Comprehensive Plan Development Guide. August 1997, p. 3.

⁴Source: Steve H. Murdock, Texas State Demographer, in "Historical Patterns and Future Trends Affecting the Population of Texas and Bryan-College Station."

methodologies, provided estimates of College Station's population in the year

TABLE 1

**COMPARISON OF COLLEGE STATION, BRAZOS COUNTY,
AND TEXAS DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES**

(Base year 2000 except as indicated)

CHARACTERISTICS	COLLEGE STATION	BRAZOS COUNTY²	TEXAS³
Sex ¹			
Percent Male	51.1	50.5	49.65
Percent Female	48.9	49.5	50.35
Education			
Percent High School Graduates	93.8	81.3	75.5
Percent College Graduates	58.1	37.0	23.2
Employment Information ⁴			
Percent Unemployed	1.60	1.50	4.22
Income			
Per Capita Income (1999)	\$15,170	\$16,212	\$19,617
Percent of Persons in Poverty	37.4	26.9	15.4
Race/Ethnicity (%)			
Anglo	80.50	66.79	53.11
Black	5.40	10.80	11.61
Hispanic	10.00	17.88	31.99
Other	4.10	4.53	3.29
Population by Age (%)			
<15	12.10	11.52	23.54
15-19	17.90	12.88	7.86
20-24	35.60	22.87	7.38
25-34	13.00	14.55	15.16
35-44	8.30	11.41	15.93
45-54	6.00	8.64	12.52
55-59	2.10	2.98	4.30
60-64	1.40	2.21	3.37
65+	3.50	6.71	9.94
Median Age	21.90	23.60	32.30

¹ Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, <http://venus.census.gov/cdrom/lookup/908233823> (10/12/98).

² Source: <http://txsdc.tamu.edu/data/census2000>.

³ Source: <http://txsdc.tamu.edu/data/census2000>

⁴ Source: Texas Employment Commission, February 2000 data, www.twc.state.tx.us (Labor Market information).

2012 ranging from 59,830 up to 159,040 (average 71,655)⁵. The city's Comprehensive Plan, completed in 1997, goes up to and includes 2010 population estimates which range from 78,000 (assuming a relatively low growth rate of 2%) to 104,400 (assuming a relatively high 4% rate). Using the higher rate of growth, the city's population could reach 127,000 by the year 2015.⁶ In planning for recreation, park, and open space requirements, a middle ground (3% growth rate) has been adopted, resulting in an estimated city population of 78,000 in 2005 and 92,191 in the year 2012. This estimate implies that approximately 24,300 new residents will locate to College Station between 2002 and 2012. If current demographics continue through the next ten years, this would include approximately 7,290 additional individuals aged 19 and under; 11,664 aged 20-35; and 5,175 over the age of 44.

C. Growth Patterns

Land Use. The Land Use Plan, adopted as part of the city's Comprehensive Plan (1997), is based on an analysis of the city's existing natural systems, development patterns, and infrastructure, as well as interviews with public officials, appointed officials, key stakeholders, and the public. Alternative scenarios were presented in community workshops and an extensive public participation process was followed.

The Land Use Plan is conditioned on political and geographic constraints to growth. The city's northern growth is limited by the political boundary with the City of Bryan. Development to the west is limited by the Brazos River and by a ridge line, which would require the installation of a lift station to expand water and sewer services. This type of infrastructure improvement is not currently in the planning stage.⁷ The main channel of Carter's Creek forms the city's eastern border.

As a result of these political and geographical constraints, most future growth for the City of College Station is anticipated to occur in its southern sector. This assumption is supported by developers' commitments and inquiries to city officials. **Map B, page I-6**, illustrates anticipated areas of new development through the year 2005. For the 2005-2012 time period, additional low-density residential development in the southern sections of the city is expected to continue.

⁵Department of Development Services, City of College Station. City of College Station Comprehensive Planning Program, Volume 1 - Base Studies and Inventories. December 1990, p. 2.

⁶Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum, Inc., Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc., and Camp Dresser & McKee, Inc. The College Station Comprehensive Plan Development Guide. August 1997, p. 4.

⁷Texas A&M University has its own water and sewer services to the west of the ridge line. Negotiations are in progress to allow the non-university public to tap into these services, which would allow some additional growth in the western sector of the city.

**Map B College Station Growth Areas
2012**

D. College Station Parks and Recreation Department (CSPARD)

Background and History. College Station's first park was established in 1938, the year of the city's incorporation. A land donation of sixteen acres was dedicated as a park to recognize Mable Clare Thomas' community work. Although the first city council made provisions for the creation of a Parks Board in May 1939, the city's second park was not established until 1947, with the purchase of land that would eventually become Brison Park. In 1953, the city mayor established a Recreation Board funded from annual city appropriations. The Board's duties included administering the parks and developing a recreational program with an emphasis on youth activities. The wide range of recreational programs offered at the time, however, depended heavily on facilities provided by Texas A&M University.

Although large scale acquisition of park lands did not take place until the 1970s, the A&M Consolidated School District agreed in 1968 to lease fire-damaged Lincoln School to the city, which renovated it into a recreation center. In 1971, Parks and Recreation became a city department, albeit with only a part-time superintendent, a part-time assistant, and volunteers. In order to ensure future recreational areas, the city council included mandatory park land dedications in the city's Subdivision Ordinance. Developers were required either to donate a portion of their land for park sites based on the number of units they constructed, or to give the city the equivalent value in cash.

The move to establish a municipal park with swimming facilities gained impetus in the early 1970s when the university advised city officials that local residents would no longer be allowed to use the Texas A&M pool. With a land donation and a federal matching grant, College Station's first aquatic facility opened in Bee Creek Park in October 1974.

Growth. A phenomenal growth in city park lands took place during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The amount of park acreage doubled, and facilities were expanded to include, for example, tennis courts, ballfields, playgrounds, and an arboretum at Bee Creek Park. In 1975 and again in 1981, the City Council amended the Park Land Dedication Ordinance to require developers to donate more acreage for neighborhood parks than was originally specified.

In 1976, the College Station Parks and Recreation Foundation was established as a trust fund expressly for purchasing the Lincoln Center from the school district. The city also continued to take advantage of federal and state matching funds to finance the acquisition and development of new facilities.

Central Park, which was the city's largest park at the time with 47 acres, was completed in 1982 with a matching grant from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. It served not only as a model for future city parks but also as the site of the Department's headquarters and maintenance facility. In 1984, the Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) created a "Christmas in the Park" celebration, which has become part of an annual event known as "Holiday on the Brazos" that now lasts for six weeks. At peak times, people enter Central Park at the rate of 600 cars per hour to view the magnificent light and decoration display. Also in 1984, the city's second largest park, Southwood Athletic Park, opened with funding from a 1981 bond issue and a matching grant from

the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Richard Carter Park, the city's first historical park, was added to the growing inventory in 1985.

Cooperation. The City of College Station and the A&M Consolidated School District, now College Station Independent School District (CSISD) signed a joint use agreement in 1987 (City Council Resolution 12-10-87-05) that provides for cooperation between the two entities for recreational programs and facilities. This agreement is the foundation for the operation of many programs, including basketball and volleyball leagues as well as instructional activities. The agreement also requires the coordination of land acquisition to facilitate school/park sites when feasible. Since 1987, two elementary schools (Rock Prairie and Pebble Creek Elementary Schools) have been developed with an adjacent neighborhood park. Two additional sites are in the planning stages for potential joint development. The city and CSISD have also cooperated on the lighting and development of thirteen tennis courts on school property that can be used by students and the general public. The department has additional agreements with CSISD to operate the Junior High Natatorium, Kid's Klub, and Xtra Education programs

Expansion. In the late 1980s, the City Council's highest recreational priority was the development of the flood plain along Wolf Pen Creek for recreational purposes. Phase I of Wolf Pen Corridor, a \$2 million project, was completed in 1993 with assistance in matching funds from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The corridor currently includes an amphitheater with a 2,000 square foot stage, a lake, a playground, restrooms, and a picnic pavilion. Construction began in summer of 2002 for the lower corridor trails, which included sidewalks, lighting, bridge, overlook pavilion, benches, landscaping and irrigation.

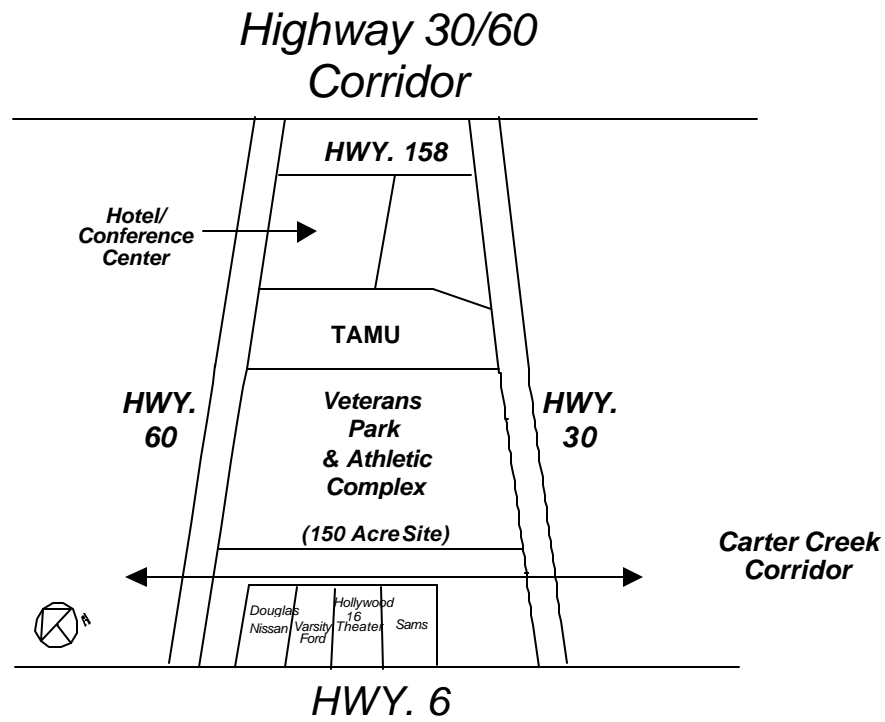
In 1987, College Station dedicated 515.5 acres in the southern sector of the city to be used as a regional nature park. The site, Lick Creek Park, provides protected habitat for endangered plant species and other native flora and fauna. In 1998, the city approved a master plan for the development of the site as a permanent nature park. Phase I of the development of this park will begin in 2003.

Another long-range project initiated in the early 1990's was implementation of the Lincoln Center/Wayne Smith Park Master Plan, which created a greenbelt corridor and additional recreational facilities (renamed W.A. Tarrow Park in 1998). In March 1995, voters approved \$3.13 million for park projects in a bond election, including funding specifically for the Lincoln Center/Wayne Smith Corridor (Tarrow Park), the renovation of the Central Park Softball Concession Building, improvements to the youth softball fields at Bee Creek Park, and the development of Pebble Creek Park adjacent to the elementary school. Funds were also set aside for the acquisition of approximately 150 acres for a major regional athletic park, recognizing that future bond funds would be needed to complete development of that site. Acquisition of land was completed in August 1998, and the park site was officially named "Veterans Park and Athletic Complex" (see Map C on page I-9).

In November 1998, city voters approved a \$4.769 million bond issue for park land capital improvements. The major items in the bond included \$2.038 million for development of the new

athletic park, \$440,000 for development of Lick Creek Park, and \$500,000 for acquisition of land for a new community park. **Appendix 1** provides further details on how these funds are allocated.

In addition, voters approved a \$3.6 million bond issue for the acquisition of portions of the 100-year floodplain for greenbelts. These natural corridors will be used for open space and passive recreation uses, and will also link parks to one another and to residential areas. A master plan for greenways acquisition and development has been approved by the City Council and is illustrated in **Map D, on page I-10**. **Map D-1, on page I-11**, also illustrates the connections possible between the greenways and the park system



Map C

Park Land Dedication Ordinance. In January 1999, the City Council approved a revised park land dedication ordinance. The previous ordinance, which dated from 1981, required developers to dedicate one acre of park land for each 133 proposed dwelling units (DUs). Under the revised ordinance, developers are required to set aside one acre per 101 DUs for single family units and one acre per 134 DUs for duplexes and multi-family units (**Appendix 3 - College Station Ordinance Number 2368**). This change maintained the city's existing standard of 3.5 acres of neighborhood park land per 1,000 population (**see Section IV**). The ordinance revisions also changed the method of calculating payments in lieu of land from a flat \$225 per dwelling unit to a system which distinguishes between single and multi-family units and between land acquisition and development (**Appendix 3**).

In addition to providing land or payment in lieu of land, developers must now also provide funds for development of the land. For single family units, developers were required to pay \$148 per DU for

land and \$309 per DU for development, for a total fee of \$457 per DU. Multi-family units require a land fee of \$112 per DU and a development fee of \$233 per DU, for a total fee of \$345. A third significant change in the dedication ordinance extended the

Map D
College Station Greenway Master Plan

Map D-1
College Station Greenway Master Plan

amount of time that payments in lieu of land could be escrowed without being subject to refund, from two to five years. Also, reviews of dedication requirements will now occur every three years and will take into account inflation as it affects land and park development costs and the city's targeted level of service for park land per one thousand residents. The ordinance was reviewed in 2001 as required and fee changes were approved by the City Council in January 2002. The new fee amounts were based on 2000 census data and increases in land costs. The new fees that took effect August 1, 2002 are a single family land fee of \$198 per DU, and \$358 per DU for the single-family development fee. The multifamily land fee is now \$160 per DU and the multifamily development fee is \$292 per DU, for a total fee of \$452. The land dedication amounts are now one (1) acre per 101 DU's for single-family and one (1) acre per 125 DU's for multifamily. Improvements were also made in definitions of acceptable dedicated property and in the acceptable design of detention areas that may be dedicated as park property.

While the dedication ordinance at this time refers exclusively to the provision of neighborhood parks, future extension of the ordinance to community parks may be desirable.

Park Acreage. The City of College Station currently has 559.27 acres of developed park land and 638.08 undeveloped acres, for a total of 1,197.35 park acres. Included in that total is the 29.7-acre Hensel Park, which serves as a community park for residents in the Northgate area (Park Zone 1). Although owned and operated by Texas A&M University, the city provides limited support and assistance. In addition, the Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the 18.5 acre municipal cemetery and a 2.3 acre conference center, which are not included in the total acreage above (see **Table 4, page IV-3, Park System Classification and Acres**). Using the end-of-year 2002 population estimate of 69,612 city residents, an average of 17.20 acres of park land are available for every 1,000 residents. The majority of this acreage, however, is in Lick Creek Park, 515.5 acres of undeveloped land which serves as a regional natural park, and the new Veterans Park and Athletic Complex, a site of 150 acres, which is being developed as a regional athletic facility. In addition, the recreational needs of students who live on campus (approximately 10,000) are expected to be met by the university. Excluding the on-campus students and two regional parks from calculations, 531.85 acres of mini, neighborhood, and community park land are available for 59,612 city residents, or approximately 8.92 acres per 1,000 population (see **Map E, page I-13, for location of parks**).

Park Zones. The Parks and Recreation Department's service area has been divided into seventeen park zones for planning purposes as shown in **Map E, page I-13**. Zone boundaries generally follow city limits, major thoroughfares, sewersheds, or creeks. However, the outer zones do not necessarily follow the city's boundaries. In some cases, they extend into county territory in anticipation of future growth and annexation of these areas. In addition, the Texas A&M University main campus is not included in these park zones.

Annual Budget. The Parks and Recreation Department's budget of \$6,091,330 (FY2003) is approximately 16% of the city's total budget of \$38,883,229 million. **Table 2, page I-15**, provides a summary of the department's fiscal year 2002-03 budget and a revenues/expenditures comparison for fiscal years 2002-2003. Currently, the Department has 72 full-time, budgeted positions (out of a total city government staff of approximately 900). **Chart 1, page I-17**, illustrates the Department's organizational structure.

Map E
College Station Park Zone Map

Programs. The Department provides a wide range of programs, which serve not only College Station's population but also residents of Bryan and Brazos County. Aquatics programs include swim lessons, aquatic camps, water aerobics, and lifeguard training. Organized athletic leagues for adults and youth include basketball, flag football, softball, tennis, volleyball, and track and field. Effective Fiscal Year 2000, the Department proposed a surcharge on all athletic team fees (excluding basketball and volleyball). The additional revenue collected is used for renovation and improvement of athletic fields and related facilities.

Understanding that there were children in the community, who would have limitations that might not allow them to gain the success desired through existing programs, the Department developed the Challenger Sports Series in 2002. This year-round series, which was created to provide programming for children who are mentally or physically challenged, currently includes soccer, basketball, and bowling, however, other sports may be added as time goes on. The desired outcome of this program is to provide an outlet for those who want to learn the basic fundamentals of athletic activities, have fun, improve physical skills, experience success, and feel special in a safe and controlled environment.

The Department also sponsors a number of educational programs, such as an Arbor Day Celebration, Black History Month, and a Certified Pool Operators course. In conjunction with the College Station Independent School District, the Parks and Recreation Department's "Xtra Education" program offers over 165 classes in leisure learning, including such fields as dance, the culinary arts, music and voice, and computers. The two entities also co-sponsor "Kids Klub," an after-school enrichment program for children in grades pre-kindergarten through sixth, and a jointly operated natatorium at the Junior High School (now College Station Middle School). Finally, the Parks and Recreation Department provides the community with a wide range of entertainment, ranging from cultural and music festivals, to youth theater and a variety of musical concerts.



The City of College Station and the College Station Independent School District have formed many partnerships over the years. One of the most successful of these partnerships is the Kids Klub After-School Program, which provides quality after-school enrichment at an affordable price in each elementary and intermediate school in College Station. Daily activities at Kids Klub are designed to foster social development as staff members act as facilitators of positive development.

Kids Klub began in 1987 with an enrollment of approximately 30 children and grew to over 764 in 2002. Currently there are five elementary schools in the College Station Independent School District (construction of a sixth

TABLE 2

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

FY 2002 BUDGET SUMMARY

<i>EXPENDITURES BY DIVISION</i>			<i>EXPENDITURES BY CLASSIFICATION</i>		
DIVISION	ACTUAL FY 02	BUDGET FY 03	CLASSIFICATION	ACTUAL FY 02	BUDGET FY 03
Administration	\$ 656,051	\$ 591,398	Salaries and Benefits	\$3,690,932	\$3,882,277
Recreation	\$ 945,403	\$1,037,498	Supplies	\$385,810	\$498,774
Special Facilities	\$1,750,878	\$1,659,653	Maintenance	\$423,272	\$375,114
Parks Operations	\$1,757,165	\$1,811,281	Purchased Services	\$1,248,956	\$1,298,165
Forestry	\$835,686	\$991,500	General Capital	\$196,213	\$ 37,000
TOTAL	\$5,945,183	\$6,091,330	TOTAL	\$5,945,183	\$6,091,330

<i>REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES COMPARISON</i>			
FISCAL YEAR	EXPENDITURES	REVENUES (TOTAL)	PERCENT REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES
FY 78	\$366,660	\$47,718	13%
FY 79	426,377	71,184	17%
FY 80	640,479	95,298	15%
FY 81	733,073	140,120	19%
FY 82	1,024,694	192,245	19%
FY 83	1,238,709	254,412	21%
FY 84	1,405,236	266,100	18%
FY 85 ¹	1,574,678	300,552	19%
FY 86	1,586,457	290,068	18%
FY 87 ²	2,395,419	453,907	19%
FY 88 ³	2,032,305	378,583	19%
FY 89	2,191,970	419,256	19%
FY 90	2,267,853	404,358	18%
FY 91	2,600,992	481,767	19%
FY 92 ⁴	2,920,782	633,797	22%
FY 93	3,083,243	628,047	20%
FY 94	3,629,048	668,189	17%
FY 95	3,944,206	766,748	20%
FY 96	4,101,906	724,913	18%
FY 97	4,220,068	800,276	19%
FY 98	4,729,878	554,454	12%
FY 99	4,729,964	764,529	16%
FY 00	5,104,774	586,205	11.48%
FY 01	5,202,211	921,289	18%
FY 02	5,945,183	955,256	16%

¹Conference Center and Teen Center added to PARD.

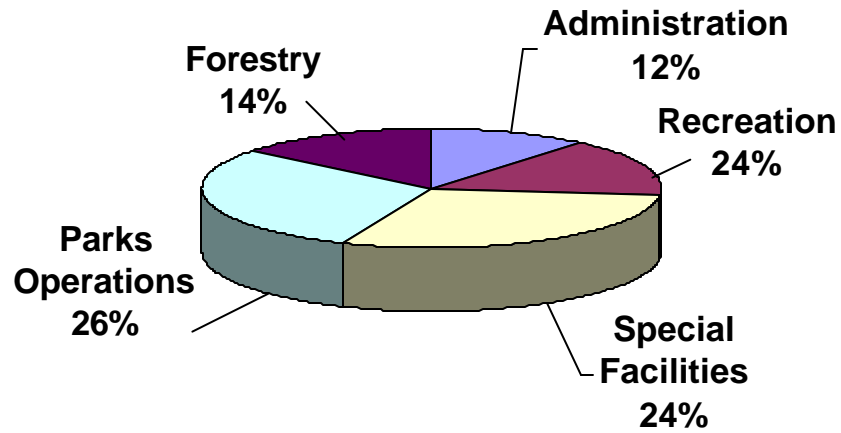
²15-Month figures.

³Cemetery added to PARD.

⁴Wolf Pen Creek Amphitheater and Adamson Lagoon implemented.

BUDGET BREAKDOWN

2002 -2003 P.A.R.D. Expenditure By Division



BUDGET BREAKDOWN

2002 -2003 P.A.R.D. Expenditure By Classification

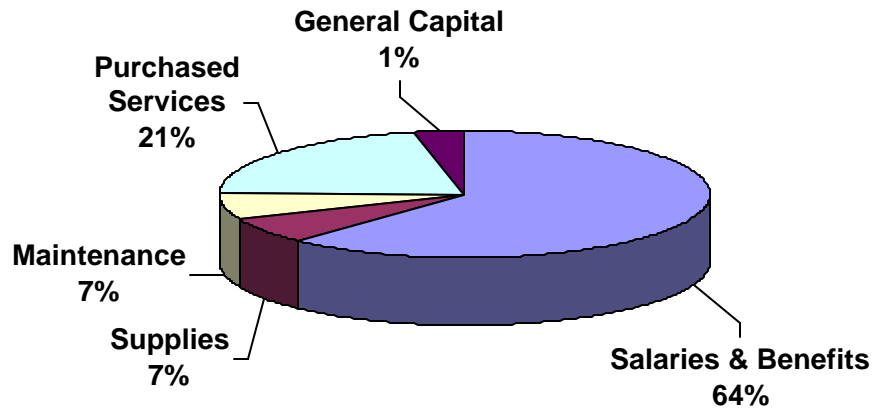


Chart 1: Department Organizational Chart

**City of College Station
Parks and Recreation Department
Organization**

